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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INR-05 NSC-05 CIAE-00
SP-02 SAA-01 SES-01 EA-06 PA-01 HA-02 MCT-01
PM-03 /049 W
----------043704 311343Z /44
P R 311230Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 124
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8349

LIMDIS

EO. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR PINT PEPR IR IZ
SUBJ: MEETING WITH NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

1. I PAID A COURTESY CALL ON NEW FOREIGN MINISTER KHOSROW AFSHAR-GHASSEMLOU EVENING AUGUST 30. THIS WAS SOMEWHAT EXTRAORDINARY GESTURE ON HIS PART SINCE I WAS THE FIRST AMBASSADOR HE HAS RECEIVED AND SINCE CALL TOOK PLACE IN MIDDLE OF HUA KUO-FENG VISIT.

2. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GENEROSITY OF THE GESTURE IS NOT MATCHED BY MY INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE MINISTER. HE IS SMALL, DAPPER, RATHER FOPPISH MAN WITH SOME SEMANTIC AFFECTATIONS WHICH PRESUMABLY REFLECT HIS TENURE AS AMBASSADOR TO LONDON. HE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO BE FORTHCOMING, BUT IT ALL CAME OUT IN A RATHER POMPOUS, CONDESCENDING WAY.

3. THE FIRST ITEM HE CHOSE TO DISCUSS WAS THE EXISTENCE OF RUMORS "AMONG A CERTAIN CLASS OF
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IRANIANS" TO THE EFFECT THAT CIA HAS HAD A HAND IN RECENT DISTURBANCES HERE. (I AM BEGINNING TO RESENT THIS DITHYRAMB AND POLITELY SUGGESTED SAME BY ASKING WHAT ACTION GOI INTENDED TO TAKE TO QUASH THESE RUMORS.)

4. UNDETERRED, THE MINISTER MOVED ON TO SUGGEST THAT THE USG UNDERTAKE TO ISSUE A RINGING STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

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FOR THE SHAH WHICH WOULD DISPEL THESE BASE RUMORS.
HE PRODUCED AN EDITORIAL FROM THE MANCHESTER UNION-
LEADER WHICH HE FELT SET JUST THE RIGHT TONE FOR SUCH
A STATEMENT AND WHICH COULD INDEED SERVE AS A MODEL.

5. WHEN I COULD GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE, I PATIENTLY
TRIED TO EXPLAIN THE POTENTIAL COUNTER-PRODUCTIVITY OF
AN OFFICIAL USG STATEMENT AT THIS TIME, DESCRIBED THE
GENERAL POLITICAL POSTURE OF MR. LOEB AND THE UNION-
LEADER AND SUGGESTED THAT HE READ JOE KRAFT'S RECENT
COLUMN AS A MORE USEFUL DOCUMENT TO WHICH GOI COULD
POINT. I SAID WE, OF COURSE, WERE INTERESTED IN
DISPELLING FALSE RUMORS AND THE SHAH HAD ASKED ME TO
DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH HOVEYDA AND SHARIF-EMAMI.

6. HAVING THUS LEVITATED MY WAY OUT OF HIS BASIC
SUGGESTION, I TURNED THE CONVERSATION TO IRANIAN RELATIONS
WITH IRAQ. I SAID I HAD BEEN STRUCK BY ALACRITY
WITH WHICH BAGHDAD HAD ARRESTED AND RETURNED
THE ALLEGED CULPRIT IN THE ABADAN FIRE. I ASKED FOR
THE MINISTER'S INTERPRETATION OF THIS ACT. HE PURSED
HIS LIPS AND SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY, BUT POINTED
OUT THAT EXTRADITION WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT FORMALITY
AND NO FORMAL REQUEST HAD TO BE MADE BY TEHRAN. HE
THOUGHT THAT WAS A GOOD SIGN.

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7. COMMENT: THESE INITIAL IMPRESSIONS MAY IMPROVE WITH
TIME, BUT MY GUESS IS THAT WE ARE GOING TO MISS THE GOOD,
GREY INTEGRITY OF KHALATBARY AND THAT THE PLODDING,
PRECIOUS PEDANTRY OF DEPUTY MINISTER ZELLI MAY BEGIN
TO LOOK GOOD BY COMPARISON.
SULLIVAN

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